

who fought for a better America and served our country with honor. I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring our Nation's heroes who have given the ultimate sacrifice to make sure that our country remains safe and free.

RECOGNIZING THE S.S. "BADGER"

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, recently Chicagoans were asked in a poll what asset of their great city they valued most. By a large margin, they chose Lake Michigan.

Lake Michigan is the primary source of drinking water for more than 10 million people—not just in my home State of Illinois but also in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan.

The lake is also part of the \$7 billion per year Great Lakes fishing industry. Millions of people visit Lake Michigan for its recreational opportunities like swimming, kayaking, boating, or just taking a walk along the beach. It is a beautiful lake.

Unfortunately, we are faced with a threat to the health of our Great Lake.

This week, on Thursday, May 24, the coal-fired car-ferry S.S. *Badger* will begin its 60th year sailing on Lake Michigan.

Many people have fond memories of the *Badger*, steaming from its homeport of Ludington, MI, to Manitowoc, WI, every summer. But they need to be reminded of this: It is the last coal-fired ferry in the United States, and every year it dumps another 500 tons of coal ash into Lake Michigan. Think about that for a moment—500 tons of coal ash every year since the 1950s. What must the bottom of the lake look like?

The owner of the *Badger* insists that the coal ash is basically just sand, but we know better. Scientists are concerned about coal ash because it contains chemicals like arsenic, lead, and mercury.

Once in the lake, these chemicals enter the food chain through the water we drink and the fish we eat. Then they accumulate in our bodies and can cause cancer and neurological damage. In fact, we already are facing problems from mercury contamination of the fish that are part of our food supply. How can we continue to accept behavior that will just make this problem worse?

If the *Badger's* owners had only recently found that dumping coal was a problem, it might be OK to cut them some slack. But the *Badger's* owners have a long history of avoiding the steps needed to clean up their act.

Most other vessels on the Great Lakes converted from coal to diesel fuel long ago but not the *Badger*.

In 2008, conversion to a new fuel was way overdue. But a waiver was placed into EPA's vessel general permit to allow the *Badger* to continue dumping coal ash through 2012. I think that was 5 years too many of toxic dumping. But to make matters worse, the *Badger's*

owners still have not made a reasonable effort to stop dumping coal ash into the lake. Instead, they are doing everything they can to avoid switching to a new fuel.

Last fall, the *Badger* was nominated to be a national historic landmark, and an amendment was added to House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act to exempt all vessels of historic significance from environmental regulation.

The national historic landmark designation was created to commemorate properties that have special significance in American history. The designation has been appropriately used to protect sites including the home of President Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, IL, and the S.S. *Milwaukee Clipper*, a retired steamship in Muskegon, MI. The national historic landmark designation was never intended to allow polluters to avoid complying with Federal regulations that protect our health and the environment.

I have urged Interior Secretary Salazar to oppose the designation of the *Badger* as a national historic landmark. I also ask my fellow Senators to join me in opposing language in the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act that would exempt "vessels of historic significance" from EPA regulation.

After I came out in opposition to this strategy, the *Badger's* owner came to Washington to talk to me.

He mentioned that he was applying for an EPA permit to continue dumping coal ash while he pursues conversion of the *Badger* to run on liquefied natural gas. He would like to make the *Badger* the greenest vessel on the Great Lakes. That would be terrific, but it just isn't a realistic option right now. Today, there are few suppliers of liquefied natural gas. There are no shipyards in the United States qualified to convert passenger vessels to run on liquefied natural gas. And it would take close to \$50 million just to develop the infrastructure needed to fuel the *Badger* at the dock.

One day, all the boats on the Great Lakes might be powered by natural gas. But it isn't a realistic plan for the *Badger* to stop dumping coal ash. It is just another delaying tactic, when the *Badger's* owners were given a deadline 5 years ago.

The *Badger* has blatantly avoided complying with current EPA regulations. We cannot reward the owners for their negligence with permanent statutory protection from EPA regulation.

This is more than a car ferry with a venerable tradition. This is a vessel that generates and dumps 4 tons of coal ash laced with mercury, lead, and arsenic into Lake Michigan every day. This Great Lake cannot take any more toxic dumping, no matter how historic or quaint the source may be.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I rise today to offer a Memorial Day tribute

to the brave men and women who have lost their lives protecting the safety and security of our citizens and American interests around the world.

Today, there are media reports about the American people becoming "war weary" after more than a decade of combat activities in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. Many lives and great expense have been marshaled since the 9/11 attacks, but I would submit that Americans are unfaltering in their appreciation for the honor, courage and dedication shown by our servicemen and women. This is especially the case for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives for their country.

This Memorial Day, I will take time to honor our brave fallen warriors, including the more than 70 military personnel from Mississippi who have died in the service of our Nation in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world over the past decade.

For the RECORD, I offer the names of these brave Mississippians who have fallen since the Nation commemorated Memorial Day last year. They are:

Sgt. Christopher R. Bell, 21, of Golden, who died June 4, 2011.

Petty Officer Stacy O. Johnson, 35, of Rolling Fork, who died July 18, 2011.

LCpl. Edward J. Dycus, 22, of Greenville, who died Feb. 1, 2012.

SFC Billy E. Sutton, 42, of Tupelo, who died Feb. 7, 2012.

MSG Scott E. Pruitt, 38, of Gautier, who died April 28, 2012.

SSG Carlous Perry, 30, of West Point, who died April 30, 2012.

I am confident that the people of my State will join the national commemoration to remember these men and the thousands of Mississippians, who over the course of this great nation's history, have courageously served and sacrificed their lives in that service. We will also recall their families and their profound loss. On this day of remembrance, we salute those sacrifices and express our gratitude for their brave service.

In these challenging times, we should also reaffirm our commitment to the servicemen and women who today put themselves in danger on our behalf. We must remain resolved to ensure that those who join our Armed Forces are the best equipped and best trained in the world, and that we meet our obligations to those who have served and sacrificed in the defense of our nation.

Let me close by expressing my personal gratitude to all our fallen heroes, and communicating my sincere appreciation to those Mississippians and Americans who answer the call to arms and find themselves in harm's way.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent during today's votes on the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act due to my daughter's high school graduation. I supported this bipartisan legislation earlier this year when it was before the Senate Health, Education,